

P. Linworth
P.O. Box 102
Berkeley, CA. 94704



LOVE
USA 22

Valerie Voigt
133 N. Temple Dr #32
Milpitas, CA.



If a pink pig is stamped here,
then this is your LAST issue.
If a green gorilla is stamped here,
then your subscription ran out with
the previous issue. TIME TO RENEW

NEW Gnostics: VOL 2 , NUMBER 1 , SEQUENCE 5

NEW Gnostics is the newsletter of the New Gnostics Special Interest Group of American Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of the writers. Mensa has no opinions and endorses none of this material.

Membership: Per Mensa regulations, full membership in the SIG is restricted to Mensa members. Non-Mensans may be Associate Members. For now, the fees for both are the same.

Submissions: Letters, Articles, Poetry, Book Reviews, anything at all (to the discretion of the editor), preferably camera ready. "Camera ready" means typed with a black carbon (film, single-strike) ribbon, single-spaced on white paper, margins $\frac{1}{2}$ "-1". Drawings should be in black ink on white paper. Submissions may be edited for taste, clarity and length and may be rejected for illegibility.

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Subscriptions: U.S.A.: \$5.00/4 issues. Foreign: \$8.00/4 issues

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Advertising: \$15/full page; \$7.50/half page; \$3.75/quarter page; \$3.00/business card size. Classified ads of up to 5 lines are free for SIG members, \$3.00 per ad per issue to non-members. I reserve the right to refuse any ad I feel is inappropriate.

Other Things: Information letter & Bibliography: \$1.00 plus Number 10 SASE. Sample issue: \$2.00. For now, make all checks payable to Paulina Unsworth

Cover by Nathaniel Hellerstein

Nancy Ashbaugh- Rt 3 Box 106, Alexandria, IN 46001

Alice Bandazy- 1515 NW 61st Ave, Margate, FL 23063

Carolyn Borders- Rt 4, Greenhill Way, Loganville, GA 30249

John Chitwood- Box P, Carmel, CA 93921

Jerry W. Cox- Route 1, Box 40-A, Woodbine, KY 40771

Claire Creedy- P.O.Box 258, Annandale, NY, 12504

James D. Gunnells- 1201-E So 33rd St, Birmingham, AL 35205

Patricia Haizlip- Drawer 2-A, Francis, OK 74844

May Harshbarger- P.O.Box 850568, Yukon, OK 73085

Nathaniel Hellerstein- 1111 J St. #109, Davis, CA 95618

Glen Humphrey- 6510 Seven Locks Rd., Cabin John, MD 20818

David Jodrey- 56 Florence Ave, Buffalo, NY 14214

Rob Jorgensen-4250 Citrus Cir, Yorba Linda, CA 92686

Maya Kennedy-88 Estates Dr #7, Danville, CA 94526

Douglas W. Kinney-4230 W. 66th St. Cir, Bradenton, FL 33529

Deborah Knight- 96 Kingston Rd. Newmarket, Ontario, Canada L3Y SW7

Darrell Llewellyn-P.O.Box 6238, San Francisco, CA 94101

Teleri Metour-4757 Martsmith Wy, Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Wilma V. Miller-113 East Collings Drive, Collings Lake, NJ 08094

Al Pietsch- 773A Dolores St., San Francisco, CA 94110

Seth Pilsk-2025 Francisco St, Apt F, Berkeley, CA 94709

Scott M. Purman- 3805 W. 68th Ave NO. 1-307, Westminster, CO 80030

Marsha Reddy-10410 Towneview Dr. Sugarland, TX 77478

William R. Tisherman-SAY WHEN PRESS, P.O.Box 942, Greenbelt, MD 20770

Larry Wampler- 5213 12th NE, Seattle, WA 98105

Michael R. Watson- 701 Central Ave, Sonoma, CA 95476

Robert L. White- P.O.Box 346, Millwood, NY 10546

David M. Wittman-8865 Co.Trk. EE, Marshfield, WI 54449

Joanne Hanny- 3408 Laguna, Oakland, CA 94602

Valerie Voigt and Zephyr Starwater- POB 9494, San Jose, CA 95157

L.V.X. c/o POB 192, Berkeley, CA. 94704

Victoria Bicunas-2500 Fairway Drive, San Leandro, CA 94579

Caroline Bicunas-2346 Vestal Way, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Frank Novak-Box A3911, Chicago, IL 60690

Christopher Farmer- POB 365, Mt. Wilson, CA 91023

Andrea Bradley-26531 Calle Lucana, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

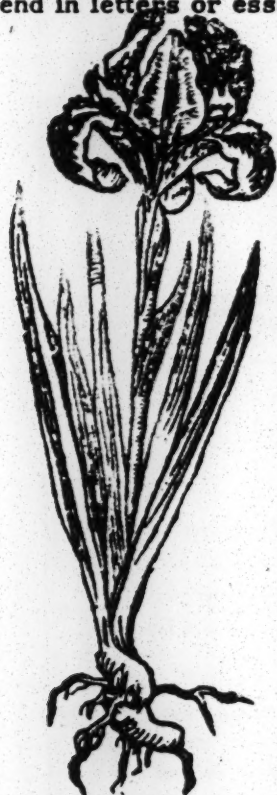
PAGE 1

FROM THE DESK OF
ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL
AND INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE
IN THE WORLD

SPECIAL NEEDS FOR
UPCOMING FEATURES



Hello, everybody. Two or three of you who promised me essays or letters or SOMETHING pooped out on me this issue. You know who you are! Come across for the next one, OK? I am still working seven days a week, and yes, it is difficult- but Oh boy! My debts are actually decreasing... Eventually, maybe I will be able to actually SAVE up to buy something... Anyway-I have received several letters of congratulation on my marriage- and I received two letters of condemnation (!). One from a person who said, "How dare you call yourself a 'New Gnostic' and get married?" (Because in his opinion, no "New Gnostics" ever marry) and one saying, "How dare you call yourself a "New Age Person" and still get married?" Well, in my opinion, the essence of all this "New Age" stuff was in the freedom to decide WHICH of the traditions of the past that you personally feel are significant and meaningful to you!! (The first comment is so absurd that I am going to pass on commenting on it.) I have printed the "What you have to say is IMPORTANT" page twice, and now it is printed on the revised booklist and information packet. For those of you who still cannot decide on a topic, I am printing the list of topics culled from issues I-X of Parabola magazine. I am wondering whether or not it would be a good idea to announce a theme for a certain issue and just hope that you would send in letters or essays on the theme?



- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| () The Hero | () Earth and Spirit |
| () Magic | () The Dream of Progress |
| () Initiation | () Mask and Metaphor |
| () Rites of Passage | () Demons |
| () Death | () Sleep |
| () Creation | () Dreams and Seeing |
| () Cosmology | () Ceremonies |
| () Relationships | () Holy War |
| () Sacred Space | () Guilt |
| () Sacrifice and Transformation | () Animals |
| () Inner Alchemy | () Words of Power |
| () Androgyny | () Sun and Moon |
| () The Trickster | () Hierarchy |
| () Sacred Dance | () Theft |
| () The Child | () Pilgrimage |
| () Storytelling and Education | () Food |
| () The Old Ones | () Wholeness |
| () Music Sound Silence | () Exile |
| () Obstacles | () The Body |
| () Woman | () The Seven Deadly Sins |

(This list of topics taken from the titles of the issues of Parabola magazine , Vols I-X)

NEW MEMBERS

James L. Hodson-8875 Ridge Ave, Townhouse #9, Philadelphia, PA. 19128
Michael J. Vittori-7115 Camilo Rd., Cocoa, FL 32927
Pauline Fox-325 6th Ave, Lewiston ID 83501
Don Wilbour-4738 16th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98105
Gary Larreategui-6432 Elfolk Terrace, Columbia MD 21045
Emilio Fischman-Oak Tree Road Box 41, Palisades, NY 10964

Page 2

Dear Paulina,

Thank you for the information about the New Gnostics SIG. It seems to be exactly the kind of thing I'm most interested in. Please enter me as a member. My yellow card and check for \$8.00 are enclosed (I don't know what "Archive Quality" is, but it sounds nice).

I enjoyed your introductory material and bibliography, and look forward to reading the newsletter.

It is refreshing to find Mensans interested in spiritual work; most of the Mensans I know seem to be the atheistic, agnostic, Carl Sagan type, and I was beginning to get tired of it...

I envy you the wealth of spiritual resources where you live. Although there is much in New York, there seems to be no place comparable to the Bay Area for seekers of truth. But my job (I'm a translator at the UN, former college professor of math) keeps me in New York for at least the next twelve years...

I hope this letter finds you totally recovered from your bronchitis or flu (I thought there was no such a thing in lovely San Francisco weather) and send you kind regards and good wishes.

Sincerely,

Emilio Fischman

(Emilio, what languages do you speak? Where were you a professor of math?) (Just curious! Did you hear about the horrible storms we had here? Flooding? We really do get bad weather- and infection!)



Dear Paulina,

I received the Dec-Jan SIG newsletter today, along with the information card. Religious Path; well I call myself Neo-Pagan; craft. I see the Divine in all from the heart of quarks to the Universe itself. I suspect that the Universe is intelligent, sentient, God, Goddess. I see, feel the oneness of all things and I see the path of man as a mechanism for this Oneness, the Universe to view itself, to marvel in its own myriad wonders and beauties. The macro is mirrored in the micro, the micro in the macro. As Above, So Below. Each of us and everything is Holy, an integral part, vital part of the Whole Universe, God. We humans, the atoms, the Earth, Solar System, Galaxy and Universe are energy which dances the Great Spiral Dance in and out from energy to matter and back to energy. We are God and so is everything and our job is to recognize it, to manifest it and to aid one another in manifesting our full potential. And with that we have the responsibility to heal our species, ourselves and our planet. Every act, every thought, everything we do affects the whole being and ultimately the Being, the only Being there is, the one we all go to make up- God. The Whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We are the physicians and stewards of our world, our living and intelligent Mother Earth. What is my Religious Path? I don't know if it has a name, Do you?

Special interests: Art, the making of. Astronomy, bird watching- the study of the natural world particularly. The Animal Kingdom. I'm a bit of a naturalist probably due to my feelings about the divinity of our world. I am also interested in the Ley Lines and standing stones which act like acupuncture for the planet and I am interested in non-human intelligence. Sorry to have rattled on so long but a short answer wouldn't cover the ground.

Teleri

P.S. The path isn't important, the destination is. All paths are valid so long as they do no harm to any and arrive at the proper destination. Besides, diversity keeps the world interesting, beautiful. One has only to look around to see that the Universe delights in diversity.

4

Dear Paulina,

What a fine issue of New Gnostics! - perhaps the best yet!

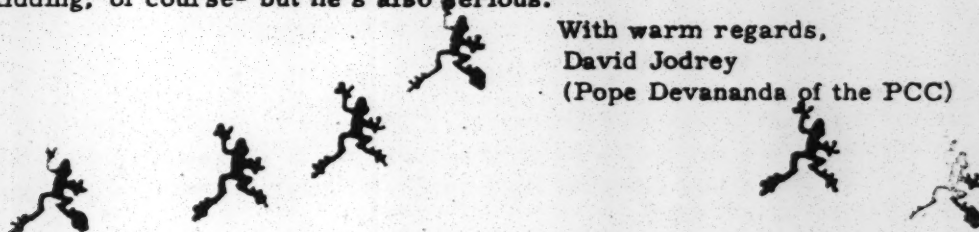
Re the story on two loaves of bread- a version of this appears in Idries Shah's Tales of the Dervishes: "Bread and Jewels", p113 of the edition I consulted yesterday (I don't have it in front of me, so the page might be wrong). It differs in some details from the story as you related it- you may have read or heard a different version, or it might be the 'creative memory' effect.

The story of the Zen monk falsely accused of paternity has its parallel in Evelyn Underhill's Mysticism - the story of the 14th Century German mystic Brother Henry Suso. However, as related by Underhill, Suso did not have the equanimity of the Zen monk- hence Underhill puts the story re the baby in her chapter, "the dark night of the soul". Sometimes it can be very hard to say- and mean- "Thy will be done". The cosmos can be a mysterious and heartbreaking place- The Challenger Disaster, e.g.

Re "The Optics of True Sight"- when I used to ride a bicycle in city traffic, I often experienced the "malevolent driver" effect- and one reads in the paper from time to time, of pedestrians killed by cars that had to swerve to hit them. I agree with Hellerstein- these are not really 'accidents'.

Your "Assume Authority" stamp is GREAT.: it reminded me of the "Grand Inquisitor" chapter from The Brothers Karamazov as well as the ministry of Father Guido Sarducci, now known as Pope Maurice (actually, he prefers just "Maurice") of the People's Catholic Church with its basic tenet of the Popehood of all mankind- I will be sending you an article about Maurice and the PCC. He's kidding, of course- but he's also serious.

With warm regards,
David Jodrey
(Pope Devananda of the PCC)



THE BEARER OF THIS CARD
IS A GENUINE AND AUTHORIZED

POPE

So please Treat Hir Right

GOOD FOREVER

Genuine and authorized by The HOUSE of APOSTLES of ERIS

Every man, woman and child on this Earth is a genuine and authorized Pope.
Reproduce and distribute these cards freely P.O.E.E. Head Temple, San Francisco

I went to hear Robert Anton Wilson speak here in Berkeley a couple of years ago, and this 'Pope' card was printed on half of the ticket stub. Please feel free to cut it out, or xerox it off for yourselves. Be your own pope! Assume authority for your beliefs.

I'll play it first and tell you
what it is later.

Miles Davis

Inspected By
Sneezy

Dear Paulina,

I was sorry to hear you'd been sick, glad to hear that you're feeling better, and particularly glad to hear that you're going to get married to someone you love very much. Mazel tov! I know, from reading his pieces in New Gnostics, that Jeff is a thoughtful, skillful writer concerned with the issues we're dealing with in the SIG- you are fortunate that your significant other is a SIGNificant other, if you'll pardon the wordplay. My own dear one (we've gotten close in the last couple of months) hasn't spent any real time in the area of 'esoteric studies', although she is familiar with the exoteric face of a lot of the issues of human development through her studies in 'establishment' psychology. She liked my piece on Monty Python, which is a good sign.

Speaking of which (Monty Python), I'm not surprised that R.A. Wilson would pick up on the "Meaning of Life" bit- I enjoyed his Illuminati Papers enough to give a copy to a friend (I wasn't as impressed with Cosmic Trigger, unfortunately, and I haven't really read more than bits and pieces of his novels.) Really, someone familiar with the mystical worldview couldn't avoid recognizing the succinct summary that M.P. gave. The discussion as to what "hats" stands for was from my own insight/imagination, though- did Wilson go into that?

After reading "The Spiritual Path", I went back to The Sufis by Idries Shah to reread the chapters in which he discusses the relationship between ecstatic experiences ('states' = hal in Sufi terminology) and the achievement of permanent stages of development of mystical insight ('makam' = stage, place, in Sufi parlance.) You and/or Jeff might want to look at these chapters which are not easy reading, but are worthwhile- see "The Book of the Dervishes" and the following chapter, "The Dervish Orders".

I've set aside my notion of writing on The Karate Kid for a much more exciting topic- "Kurt Vonnegut, Closet Gnostic"- in which I rip off the hypocritical mask of atheism and show that Vonnegut is actually a mystic! He's been hinting at it for a while, of course, especially with the concepts of Bokononism in Cat's Cradle, but in Galapagos he makes his mystical affiliation perfectly clear (at least to the discerning reader, such as myself). You may be familiar with "The Hymn of the Pearl" (it appears under that title in The Other Bible ed. Willis Barnstone, Harper and Row, 1984, and under the title "The Hymn of the Robe of Glory" in G.R.S. Mead's Fragments of a Faith Forgotten (1900, originally; reprinted by University Books in 1960). Deikman's The Observing Self quotes "The Precious Jewel" from Idries Shah's Thinkers of the East, which has the same plot. (note- it is also the plot of Doris Lessing's novel, Briefing for a Descent into Hell, the same point of view is found in the song, "Secret Society" from the album by Utopia P.O.V.) Basically, the prince is sent in disguise to a dark land to find and bring back a precious pearl; he falls into forgetfulness, but is reminded by a messenger of his origin and mission and is able to accomplish his mission and return to his homeland.

In Galapagos, the last 2 pages of the novel have this same structure: Leon Trout, a Marine on duty in Viet Nam, who is suffering from a desire to sleep all the time, after participating in the massacre of a village, tells a Swedish doctor in Thailand about it. Trout is pretty much affectless- emotionally dead- about it, but is restored to human feeling by a surprising question from the doctor: "Are you related to the

wonderful science-fiction writer, Kilgore Trout?" At hearing the name of his father, the son bursts into tears (Kilgore Trout is a failure, of whom no one has heard). Later the doctor says to Leon- "there is a cure for your condition, but it's risky"- and he suggests Leon go to Sweden for asylum. "But I don't know Swedish." "You'll learn," the doctor assured him, "You'll learn, you'll learn." Leon Trout=forgetful prince in exile

Swedish doctor= messenger, who reminds prince of his origin (Kilgore Trout)
Asylum in Sweden= escape from total darkness to a realm of light

"learning Swedish"- waking up, discovering the precious pearl= one's true essence (Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you")

This structural similarity might be coincidental, I guess, but there are other clues- for example, during most of the action, the narrator, Leon Trout is a ghost. He tells us he chose to be a ghost because of the powers that go along with it- to read minds, to understand how a situation came to be structured as it was, and thus to know the possibilities it contains, and to have access to all human knowledge (I am quoting from memory- I had to return the library's copy, and don't have the \$ to buy my own right now). These are not the powers of an ordinary ghost, at least as far as my own reading in folklore goes- these are the (perhaps exaggerated) powers of an enlightened sage.

Really, I think you ought to read the whole book, but may I suggest that if you just read any of the versions of the "Hymn of the Pearl" and the last 2 pages of Galapagos - you will notice so striking a correspondence that most reasonable people will be able to see it. I'm sure it's intentional. I think Vonnegut, like Lessing, has approached mysticism by the path of religious skepticism (as you know, Lessing was formerly a Marxist) As is quoted on p. 219 of Idries Shah's The Way of the Sufi, hardback edition:

What Must Come

To those who seek truth in conventionalized religion:

Until college and minaret have crumbled
This holy work of ours will not be done.
Until faith becomes rejection
And rejection becomes belief
There will be no true believer

Abu Said

Anyway, enough for now. I'll develop the Vonnegut piece a bit further and send it on to you soon. If you are ready to go with issue #4, and haven't heard from me, and want to print this first draft version, that's OK.

With Warm Regards,
David Jodrey

I am glad you are going to write on Vonnegut. I am going to print this letter- but if you write another (longer, deeper) essay, I will probably print it too. I haven't read much of Vonnegut: just Cat's Cradle and Slaughterhouse 5 - but they are both so obviously mystically-oriented! The 'ice nine' notion in Cat's Cradle reminds me of Castaneda's "Stopping the World". ..

No, R.A. Wilson, did not go into the 'hats' part- he just quoted that passage, but that was enough!

HOW TO MAKE SOAP

1 can lye (no additives!-check label!)

5 lbs + animal fat, rendered and purified

2 1/2 pints water

1) Use only stainless steel or spackle enamel ware utensils and pots!

Do NOT use glass, crockery or aluminum!

2) Have vinegar handy as an antidote to splashed lye. Wear an apron.

Wear goggles or glasses, if you are really inept (like me). Keep baby away.

3) Melt fat. Weigh it out.

4) Dissolve lye in water. When fat and lyewater are cool, add fat to lyewater.

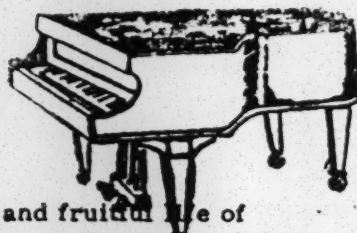
5) Stir, stir, stir (slowly- do not beat. You are trying to thoroughly mix all the lye with the fat so that perfect saponification occurs, so that there is NO free lye in the soap to irritate sensitive skin.) I stirred for about 20 minutes.

6) Pour into a wax-paper lined box (or pan). Let set for a month, then cut into cakes.

Does anybody know a recipe for oil-based soap? I want to make 100% olive oil soap! Three free cakes of olive oil soap to the first person who gives me the recipe!

ECOLOGY

Zen Monk



Imagine if you will, a Zen Master who after a long and fruitful life of chopping wood, carrying water, posing koans, and slapping disciples decides that in his next incarnation he should help to instruct the West in the essential principles of Zen. He reincarnates as a black male on the east coast of the U.S. and becomes involved in the current local version of the Mystery Schools, i.e., jazz. He would then bring to his music not only the essential spiritual principles but also the dry wit and austere aesthetic sense of Zen. His music would cut like a blade through social conventions and polite sensibilities to pierce the core of experience, yet it would maintain a sense of humor, grace, and gentleness.

Such is the music of Thelonious Monk. Sparse and angular like a raked gravel garden. Provoking unexpected laughter like some non-verbal koan. Firmly rooted in the commonplace yet connecting inevitably with the source of "mysterious understanding" (Huang Po's term for the experience of the Universal Mind).

Listen, for example, to the recording of "Rhythm-a-ning" on the Live at the It Club album. This tune has a characteristically catchy yet disjoint theme, that to me is very upbeat and joyful. After Charlie Rouse's good solid sax solo, Monk starts to rework the melody phrase by phrase. It is typical of Monk that he rarely gets very far away from the original melody in his improvising yet he approaches that melodic material from so many different angles (harmonic and rhythmic) that it remains ever fresh and exciting. His short choppy phrases may seem a bit haphazard at first but one gradually comes to realize that Monk is utilizing the spaces between the notes to almost as much effect as the notes themselves. Phrases hang in mid-air, each a separate sparkling gem and all inter-related. Monk's rhythmic sense is very acute and one or two well-placed notes may contain a wealth of meaning. Gradually, he pares down the melody, strips it of its features one by one in order to penetrate the real core of the music. Fewer and fewer notes are used to greater and greater effect until finally Monk reaches the central axis of his musical world. He then interjects his personal theme-song (called "Thelonius") into the performance with incredible speed and dexterity, as well as a certain "mysterious understanding". It's as though Monk's stripping away of the melodic embellishments also strips away the internal dialogue (ego) until those last few phrases stop it completely and the interjected theme is conducted/experienced in that shining void beyond conceptualization.

The trio recordings of "Little Rootie Tootie" and "Bemsha Swing" are similar masterpieces. "Little Rootie Tootie" is Monk's version of the standard jazz device, the train song. It incorporates clever imitations of train whistles and clacking wheels. The piece is not merely clever though. Monk once again contorts and manipulates the theme with incredible ingenuity. His interaction with Art Blakey (the drummer) on "Bemsha Swing" is remarkable. It is almost as if one person were playing both piano and drums at once. Again his improvising is incredibly fresh and exciting. Both of these pieces radiate a pure joy that can provoke spontaneous laughter and with it insight. Jazz koans.

I could also mention his off-center reworking of Duke Ellington's "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing" or "Black and Tan Fantasy", his many fantastic versions of "Blue Monk" or his subtle, slightly spooky theme "Epistrophy" but his music really must be heard to be understood.

Recommended Albums

Thelonius Monk (Prestige - red cover, 2 LPs)
The Riverside Trios (Prestige)
Live At the It Club (CBS)
Genius of Modern Music, Vol 1 (Blue Note)
Live At the Five Spot (Prestige)
Pure Monk (Prestige)



Editor's note: For those of you who like classical music- the Kronos Quartet has put out an album of Monk's music scored for strings. Also the Oakland Symphony performed one of Monk's pieces during the last season. Finally, an unusual 2-record set, a tribute to Monk, called "That's The Way I Feel Now" (A & M records) was released last year. There are twenty-three selections of Monk's tunes, each performed by different artists - as varied as Dr. John, Carla Bley, Todd Rundgren, Peter Frampton, Joe Jackson, and Steve Lacy with Gil Evans.



Dear Paulina,

I enjoyed your New Gnostics newsletter very much, especially the color rubber stamped decorations. You asked whether anyone had read novels by Phillip K. Dick. I'm an avid reader of science fiction and really liked "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep". What do I think he was trying to say? Well, Dick was an anti-materialist. In his stories the "real world" as experienced through the senses is generally illusory and misleading. The "true nature" of things is ambiguous and difficult to determine but is most readily discovered through intuition and religious experience.

The most obvious example of this is in "Do Androids Dream" is, of course, Mercerism. Wilbur Mercer (sounds like mercy?) seems to be a Christ-like figure- a humble man (or whatever) who accepts torment and death for the benefit of his followers. Rick Deckard tries to find meaning and purpose in physical objects: a "mood organ", television, and pet animals- both real and mechanical but in the end it is Wilbur Mercer who "saves" him, even though Mercer is revealed to be a "fake" by Buster Friendly, the television android. It is belief or "fusion with Mercer" that matters, not who Wilbur Mercer actually may be.

Another aspect of this "reality" theme is the conflict between the natural (made by God) and the artificial (made by humans). Dick seems to be saying that the two are incompatible and the artificial inevitably drives out the natural. Nuclear war eradicated most forms of life and made the Earth uninhabitable. Television and "mood organs" replace natural human experiences and emotions. Ultimately, the androids threaten to replace or at least to become indistinguishable from humans. Though not stated explicitly, this seems to be the justification for "retiring" them- at least in Rick Deckard's mind. In an ironic twist, the humans are fleeing the earth for the artificial environment of the colonies while, in contrast, the androids are trying to escape to the earth- to become more human, perhaps?

I believe the people and androids in the story are intended to represent different aspects of the human mind. The people with their exaggerated concern for animal life and "empathy" represent the intuitive and emotional side while the androids represent the deductive and rational side- as for example where the android Pris cuts off a spider's legs because it's not 'efficient' to have so many legs. The confrontations between the bounty hunters and the androids, especially the one between Rick Deckard and Rachel Rosen demonstrate that the intuitive side is stronger than the rational. The androids try to control and neutralize Rick through the material side of his life: Buster Friendly on T.V., Luba Luft the opera singer, seduction by Rachel Rosen, and finally killing his pet goat. None of this succeeds because of Rick's uniquely human ability to trust in the immaterial. I think Dick is saying that it is foolish to seek meaning and purpose in material things- as they can be lost or destroyed at any time; only the immaterial world of the human mind can be counted on.

Best Wishes, Glen Humphrey

(This fascinating letter was sent to me last October 5th.... And only now am I getting around to printing it! Anybody else have a comment on Phillip K. Dick??)

Zen (Ch'an) ~ 6th Century A.D.

A special transmission outside of the scriptures.
No reliance on words and letters.
Direct pointing to the soul of man.
Seeing into the nature of self.
And the attainment of Buddhahood.



Volkswagen ~ 20th Century A.D.

A standard transmission underneath the chassis.
Strong reliance on gasoline.
Goes where it's pointed.
Seeing out through the windshield.
And the attainment of Buddhahood.

(contributed by David Jodrey. David, did you write this?
It's hilarious! But then, I have a little volkswagen of my
own)

What was the name of the song the Beatles wrote about
Halley's comet? Answer: "You won't See Me"

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING 1985

INCOME

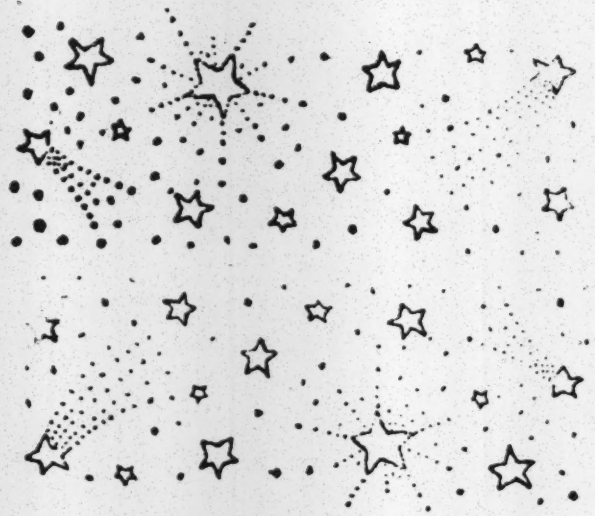
Information requests, 46 @ \$1 = \$46.00
Subscriptions, 51 @ \$3.00 = \$153.00
Subscriptions, 8 @ \$5.00 = \$40.00
Donations = \$93.00
Advertising = \$15.00
Backissues, 4 @ \$1.00 = \$4.00

Total income, 1985 = \$311.00

OUTGO

Xeroxing = \$183.61
Office Supplies = \$27.59
Postage = \$92.91

Total Outgo 1985 = \$304.11



9

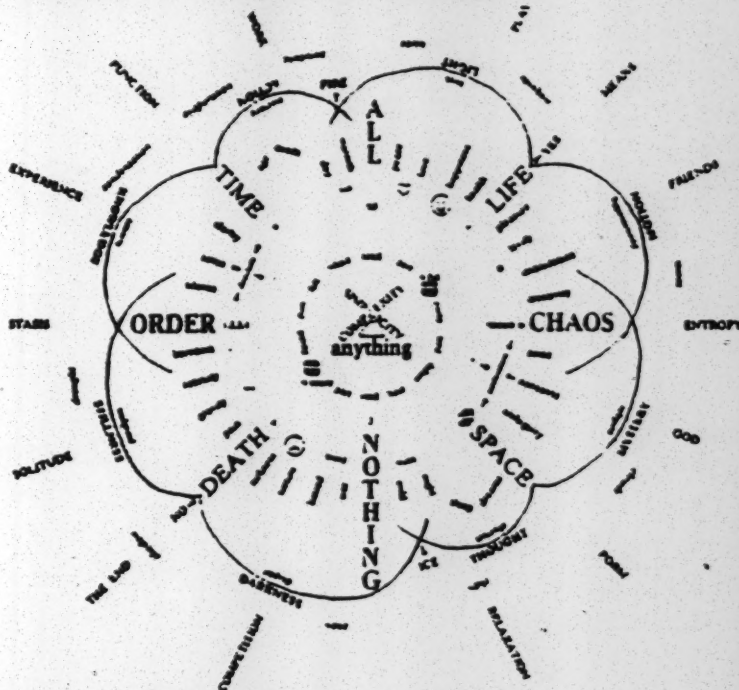
QUESTION TIME

Do biorhythms work for you? Do they work at all?

Fellow Mensans: I offer this page to you not simply as an ad, but also as a personal introduction. Writing is what I do best and love most. I spent five years writing Order and Chaos, Nothing at All, then chose to edit, design and publish the book myself... because that's the way I felt it should be done. I sincerely believe that you'll find my book entertaining, enlightening and refreshingly different. If you have any questions or would like to see/know more, please feel free to write, or call (301) 474-0352. By all means, enjoy. . .

The book starts here.*

fiction
poetry
philosophy
humor
graphics
and this →



Order and Chaos, Nothing at All

excerpts:

He who hesitates is lost.
He who hesitates in a revolving door
is splashed.

Truth is the reason
that lies are lies and fools are
the only ones fooled.

Recognition changes everything,
when we find that more is true
than is right,
but all that is wrong
is wrong for good reason.

This is why healing lasts
longer than pain.

Life is more than a matter of aim.
The best of hope always stands back
to back with the risk of loss.
Luck is the warp in our arrow,
the twitch in our finger
as we search for targets
all along the way;
in the end, we become our own.

by W.R. Tish

This is a limited first edition offer.
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yellow. All books are signed to order
and mailed the same day, satisfaction
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Say When Press
P.O. Box 942
Greenbelt, MD 20770

* What happens when Simon says "I'm not Simon"?

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Pauline Unsworth
P.O. Box 192
Berkeley, CA 94704



VAERIE VOIGT
3087 Ross Road
Palo Alto CA

94303

If a pink pig is stamped here,
then this is your last issue.
If a green gorilla is stamped here,
then last issue was your last issue!!
Time to renew!



שערי שלום

(Gate of Peace)

NEW Gnostics: VOL II , NUMBER 2 , SEQUENCE 6 , DATE JULY 1986

NEW Gnostics is the newsletter of the New Gnostics Special Interest Group of American Mensa. Opinions expressed herein are those of the writers. Mensa has no opinions and endorses none of this material.

Membership: Per Mensa regulations, full membership in the SIG is restricted to Mensa members. Non-Mensans may be Associate Members. For now, the fees for both are the same.

Submissions: Letters, Articles, Poetry (in moderation!), Book Reviews, anything at all (to the discretion of the editor), preferably camera ready.

"Camera ready" means typed with a black carbon (film, single-strike) ribbon, single spaced on white paper, margins 1/2"-1". Drawings should be in black ink on white paper. Submissions may be edited for taste, clarity and length and may be rejected for illegibility.

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Subscriptions: U.S.A.: \$5.00/4 issues. Foreign: \$8.00/4 issues.

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Advertising: \$15.00/full page; \$7.50/half page; \$3.75/quarter page;

\$3.00/business card size; Classified ads of up to 5 lines are free for SIG members, \$3.00 per ad per issue to non-members. I reserve the right to refuse any ad I feel is inappropriate.

Other Things: Information letter and Bibliography: \$1.00 plus Number 10 SASE

Sample Issue: \$2.00. Back Issues: \$2.00 each. Note: NO back issue will have stamp impressions in color! That goes for archive back issues as well!

For now, please make all checks payable to: Paulina Unsworth

Replies: If you need a personal reply, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope or postcard with your letter, otherwise I will try to reply in the next issue of New Gnostics

All correspondence from SIG members on pertinent topics is considered for publication unless specifically marked "not for publication"

Cover Art: Nathaniel Hellerstein

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Well, things have calmed down considerably. Jeff and I are now married. The ceremony and reception came off without a hitch. Valerie Voigt married us using an ecumenical Gnostic Christian ceremony modified from a sample ceremony sent to me from Ecclesia Gnostica in Palo Alto. It was beautiful and meaningful and moving- and we jumped the broom, too. My sister Victoria baked and decorated the cake, and the reception was pot luck. Many of our friends attended and we had a wonderful time.

An amusing contrtemps occurred when we examined our marriage license. To save money, we opted for the "confidential marriage license", for which the blood tests are waived (saving us \$30 for drawing blood and at least \$50 worth of annoyance), however such a license is only valid if the ceremony is performed in the county in which the license was issued. (i. e. Alameda County) Now the ceremony was performed at Jeff's parents' house in Contra Costa County, so after the festivities, Jeff and Valerie and I drove across the county line to a bus stop in Berkeley and repeated our vows again (a short version). For those of you who know Berkeley, we were legally married at the Thousand Oaks and Colusa bus stop!

Once upon a time there was a sultan who called his advisors together and said, "I want something that will make me happy when I'm sad- and sad when I'm happy- oh, and by the way, I want it by Tuesday or I'll chop off your heads" Of course, the advisors were all distressed until the youngest came up with the perfect solution- a ring on which was engraved "This Too Shall Pass".

Jeff and I were both impressed with this story-emphacizing the transitoriness of all things and the necessity for living in the NOW and not dwelling on "the good old days" or worrying about the future. My first marriage failed, and the sentiment expressed then was "Now and Forever". Jeff and I thought that "This Too Shall Pass" was more appropriate, more realistic and certainly more honest, so we had it engraved in our own rings to remind us to take each moment as it comes.

Finally- will somebody PLEASE send me some drawings! I have used Nathaniel's drawings for the cover for several issues and I can't keep relying on him all the time! Somebody out there can draw, can't they? Use black ink on white paper, please! -love to you all- Paulina and Jeff

Just a reminder- I still have two different addresses of people who are collecting stamps (postage stamps) to help children. Bob and Betty Mayer (Stamps for Children) 4416 Walbridge Trail, Dayton, OH 45430 are collecting stamps to encourage disabled children to learn to collect stamps as a hobby. The Church World Service collects stamps to SELL to collectors and donates the money collected to buy food (particularly milk) for needy families and orphanages. Send inquiries to: Edith Ryerson, 15 Arlmonte Ave, Kensington, CA 94707. Remember, these stamps are for COLLECTORS, so I urge you to please use commemorative stamps as much as possible, and DO NOT DAMAGE the stamps- just cut around them and send them, paper and all. Stamps of denomination less than 22¢ are not worth sending. Foreign stamps are especially welcome. You can send the stamps to me, or directly to the addresses above. In any case, try to use commemorative stamps when writing to me. Thank you! -Paulina

Am believe in

"THE INSPIRED WORD"

by

Thomas R. Hunt

"Do you accept the inspired word of the Bible? Are you saved? Have you accepted Jesus (as your personal saviour)?"

How often does one have to deal with these questions, and how can a thoughtful, educated person who is conversant with the religious impulse as it manifests in many forms and cultures respond? If you are like me, you immediately know that there is a problem of definitions, ie "Saved from what?" My ex-wife used to reply to the question, "Have you been born again?" by replying that she didn't need to be, she had been born an Anglican in the first place.

I have always felt that I "accepted the inspired word of the Bible" and then learned that to some people that means believing that each and every word in it is literally true, from Creationism in the Garden to Gog and Magog in Communistic atheistic Russia and the "rapture".

Clearly my definition was and is different. The question that arises is "what is the best or most useful definition of this difficult phrase, and why."

There are several interpretations of the phrase "inspired word of the scriptures", and a brief examination of the different perspectives is in order before examining the one that I feel to be the most useful.

Position 1. An omnipotent, omniscient and personal God selects a prophet/apostle as his messenger and dictates a message directly and literally to him. The message is to be eternally true, relevant and unalterable. The omnipotence of God assures this message Canonical status. The rationale is: If this were not the WORD, God would not allow its inclusion in the Canon. If it is the WORD, exclusion from the Canon is impossible. This position seems to be an instance where the notion of free will is suspended. It is akin to the doctrine of Papal infallibility, i.e. that God will not permit false doctrine to be expressed by the Patriarch of Rome. The question of canonical status, while not to my mind directly linked to inspiration as I will define it, is, from the perspective expressed above absolutely linked, and so is here expressed.

Position 2. Similar to 1, but here the prophet/apostle uses his own idiom. Nevertheless, his selection by God was because his idiom would be eternally true and relevant.

Position 3. Similar to 2, but less claim as to eternal validity of idiom. In other words, the message may have been addressed to a particular issue at a particular time, and the message has contemporary meaning to the degree that the contemporary situation corresponds to the original situation.

* Interestingly, the Bible is sometimes referred to as the "Paper Pope".

Position 4. God, or the Divine, may seem to be different things to different people. This is not to say that the differences render other experiences invalid, but instead suggests that the object is more vast than any one person's vision. An aspect is perceived. That perception may take the form of a literal voice, a vision, a sense of a vision, or a vision of writing. It may be the sudden occurrence of a thought or a slowly dawning awareness. This is the definition I will later pursue.

Position 5. A retreat from position 4, in that it is a psychological conviction or expression. In other words, it is entirely internal, and the contact is delusion.

Position 6. Moral purpose, using prophecy or "God's Word" as a convention and form to express what the author believes to be the will of God or God's word if God existed and spoke on the subject. It may include the faith that what is written will be inspired because of the use of such a form. Here again is the Papal infallibility notion. This forum is typical of early legal codifications such as Hammurabi's, and may reasonably be inferred to apply to codification regularizing early Hebraic society.

Position 7. The use of convention without faith or notion as to inspiration. In such cases the message may well be less profound than thought to be.

Position 8. Cynical fraud.

An understanding of the transmission process is essential. Operating under position 4 we start from the interaction of the prophet/apostle with the divine. Whether it is a bidirectional interaction or a one directional contact is irrelevant. An event takes place. The occurrence of the event verifies that there is some sort of veil or filter between the divine and the human. This is veil #1.

The experienter then has to interpret the experience and encode it into language. Such language is composed of common experiences, and THIS experience is uncommon. Metaphor, imagery, or some other poetic device is needed. This encoding into symbolic language is veil #2.

The encoded message then goes through one or more additional translations. Each translation is a veil. For example, a person, whose native language were French, using the old vulgate Bible of Jerome, and reading Amos would be dealing with a Hebrew text translated into the Greek Septuagint, then into Latin and finally into French by the reader. This would be veils #3, #4, and #5. (Hebrew to Greek, Greek to Latin, and Latin to French)

The message is also filtered through a cultural veil. This may be thought of as time displacement, social displacement, knowledge displacement, experience displacement etc. in other words all that separates the original messenger from the hearers.

The hearer then has to decode and interpret the message. The interpretation may then have an effect on the hearer. If the veils are not too dense, the message may conform to the original experience. Diagrammatically the process looks like this:

GOD/DIVINE

----- (Veil #1 that between God and man, the divine and the human)

PROPHET

----- (Veil #2 - language or metaphor for uncommon experience)

WORD

----- (Veil #3 - time - c.2,500 yrs.)

----- (Veil #4 - Language - Hebrew or Koine Greek to English)

----- (Veil #5 - Cultural)

----- (Veil #6 - Societal)

----- (Veil #7 - Educational)

----- (Veil #8 - Theological)

----- (Veil #9 - Experiential)

HEARER



Certain acts on the part of the hearer can facilitate the transmission process. These are:

1. Understanding of the historical framework of the original encoder.
2. Understanding of the language and idiom of the original encoder.
3. Understanding of the theological/religious framework of the original encoder.
4. Understanding of the theological/religious idiom of the original encoder.
5. Familiarity with other and traditional interpretations of the message.
6. Familiarity with concepts and varieties of religious experiences.
7. Actual experiences of religious types.

Possession of faculties 6 and/or 7 may be superior to faculties 1,2,3, and in conjunction, because they serve to render only the original encoded message more clear. 6 and 7 help the hearer to go directly to the experience that lies behind the words.

Since a large part of the communication process involves the hearer, it is perhaps useful to consider that what the hearer receives may be what makes something inspired. Some of these hearer positions are necessary correlaries of some of certain transmission positions, some are not.

1. The extreme position that it is literally true. The message is inspired, what the hearer interprets or infers is irrelevant.

2. The message is inspired if the message received approximates that transmitted.

3. The message is inspired if it results in a moral sense or religious augmentation in the hearer whether the transmission was inspired or not. In other words,, a laundry list, if it inspires a reader religiously is inspired. This is the Baalam ass vehicle of grace paradigm.

4. The message is inspired if the hearer regards it as such regardless of whether it was inspired on transmission. This is similar to the previous position, but does not need to produce a religious or moral augmentation. An extreme example of this is "speaking in tongues" There may be no intelligible message, and the hearer may have no reaction to it, yet view it as "inspired".

5. The message is inspired if and only if the transmission was inspired. Response in the hearer is irrelevant. Lack of response cannot take away the inspired nature of the message, nor can spontaneous inspiration turn the son's ear into a silk purse.

6. The message is inspired only if A. the message was inspired at transmission, and B. it is accepted as inspired by hearers.

Put into logical truth tables, of two statements, T - Inspired transmission. and R - Inspired reception, both either true or false, with correlaries of a conjunction and a disjunction (a conjunction being "and" so that the message must be inspired both on transmission and reception to truly be inspired. The disjunction being and/or so that inspiration depends only on inspired transmission or reception, but not both.).

T	R	T&R	TvR
t	t	t	t
t	f	f	t
f	t	f	t
f	f	f	f

Applying the symbolic representations to the reception positions, they take this form:

Post. 1 R therefore T. T therefore R.
Post. 2 R&T
Post. 3 R
Post. 4 R
Post. 5 T
Post. 6 R&T

I think that the best, the most useful definition for both common usage and scholarship, is one that combines transmission position #4:

God, or the Divine, may seem to be different things to different people. This is not to say that the differences render other experiences invalid, but instead suggests that the object is more vast than any one person's vision. An aspect is perceived. That perception may take the form of a literal voice, a vision, a sense of a vision, or a vision of writing. It may be the sudden occurrence of a thought or a slowly dawning awareness.

With reception position #3:

The message is inspired if it results in a moral sense or religious augmentation in the hearer whether the transmission was inspired or not. In other words, a laundry list, if it inspires a reader religiously, is inspired.

The advantages are:

1. Renders coherent many contradictions of idiom and interpretation.
2. Keeps religio/moral purpose of scripture always in mind, yet always in perspective too.
3. Encourages language, source, historical and exegetical scholarship as a means to provide better transmission of the message.
4. Doesn't invalidate or render empty the good acts and efforts of people which may proceed from misconceptions.
5. Position is not threatened by any possible discoveries in any field.
6. Recognises a dimension of message that is often ignored or overlooked, namely the attempt to express an experience or perception of the divine. This is the reality behind the first filter. This is usually forgotten, and only the encoded message is considered, not that which is behind the message.

Inspired* means an inspired transmission or an inspired transmission, or both. (TuR) This definition, if used, welcomes all scholarship and inquiry. Such inquiry does not threaten this position. Nor does it invalidate any good proceeding from misinterpretation, nor deny that a message that fails to succeed in communicating to a hearer was not inspired. It doesn't threaten established hermeneutical traditions nor cut off future hermeneutical uses.



Dear Paulina:

Much to my delight, I finally received your material. The address on the envelope did not include a street so the post office located me using the postal code. It seems they had a bit of fun and responded to your HOORAY! with notes of their own. I must now explain my four-pig rating to my mailman. He seems a little friendlier these days.

I was delighted with the book list and surprised that you included the translation of the Nag Hammadi Library. It isn't the most easily-attainable book in the world. Recently a stage production, 'Thunder, Perfect Mind' was performed at our planetarium, so I assume there is at least one other person in Canada who has read the book. Of course, you wouldn't know it by attending the play. It had nothing to do with gnosticism.

You might be interested to know that Darryl Hall has studied the subject and has a keen interest in mysticism. Perhaps he would agree to an interview for your newsletter. (If you would like to contact him, you could call the William Morris Agency in L.A. The people there are generally very helpful in locating talent. If that fails, the American Federation of Musicians in New York 212-869-1336 knows how to reach just about anybody. Ask for 'Bookings'.)

I am particularly interested in David Bowie, who claimed himself to be a Kabbalist several years ago. Of course, David is virtually impossible to approach. Any attempts I've made have been disappointing. (I managed to obtain the unlisted phone number of his New York representative. The poor man became extremely upset when I called -- even though I wished to discuss a business proposition on behalf of Coca-Cola Ltd. Canada.)

If you are interested in recommending additional books to your members, I have a few suggestions:

A Kabbalah for the Modern World (Migene Gonzalez-Wippler)

Kabbalah and Its Symbolism (Scholem)

The Gnostic Circle (Patrizia Norelli-Bachelet)

Zohar (edited by Gershom Scholem)

The Kabbalah (Adolphe Franck)

Christian Myth and the Dead Sea Scrolls (Allegro)

Holy Blood, Holy Grail (Michael Baigent)

The Jesus Scrolls (I have been unable to locate this book. It was recommended by Bowie in an interview in a British magazine. The local library is still searching.)

I was surprised that you did not include Hesse's *Damien* on your list.

Along the more scientific lines, you might consider Lyall Watson's books and studies into morphogenetics by Rupert Sheldrake.

While I would like to make a contribution to your newsletter, I'm afraid that my understanding of the religion is, at best, limited. And there's always the problem of time. I am currently working on two novels, a screenplay, a musical stage-play, and a collection of poetry. In my copious free time I am also attempting to complete a chemistry course. (My education can only be described as erratic. I have attended college, university, a three-year program in Advertising, and now, having realized my knowledge of atomic structure is obsolete I have returned to high school.)

I look forward to your upcoming newsletters. It's great to know there are motivated people like you who will contribute their time and energy to something they really believe in. (Oh, hell! I ended a sentence with a preposition.)

Again, my thanks.

Deborah Knight

Deborah Knight.

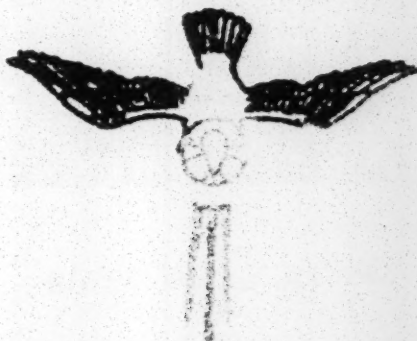
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Alexander 'Jubilee' Bartlett-P.O.Box 306, Gardner, CO 81040
Lucinda Bourne-P.O.Box 1959, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Rob Davis-P.O.Box 146, West Somerset, KY 42564
Amelia Greene-2314 Southmoor Dr., Champaign, IL 61821
Donna Jones-5300 Waverly Dr. E. Bldg 3, Palm Springs, CA 92262
Lloyd Linklater-20479 Anita, Castro Valley, CA 94546
Pat Mahon-Agate Ridge Observatory, Wilson Creek Road-Box 27,
Ashwood, Oregon 97711
Stuart Marks-5936 Belmont Av #2, Cincinnati, OH 45224
Mark McWiggins-Box 70544, Bellevue, WA 98007
Dr. Wilson Reid Ogg-1104 Keith Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708
Mrs. Leah Reuben-11957 Kiowa No E., Los Angeles, CA 90049
Ted H. Reed-685 San Fernando Dr., Smyrna, GA 30080
Herbert Riedel-The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409
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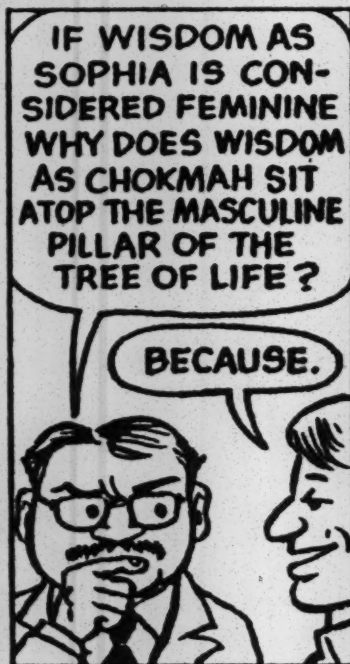
CORRECTION: David Jodrey's address was printed incorrectly last issue. He really lives at: 50 Florence Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14214

Two wonderful books have just been published: The Grail Legend by Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz. This is a new translation by Andrea Dykes, and The Unholy Bible (Blake, Jung and the Collective Unconscious) by June Singer (author of Androgyny) both by Sigo Press. (that is, both The Grail Legend and The Unholy Bible from Sigo Press.) I haven't read either of them yet- but I've got them in front of me and I plan to read them!



This tidbit appeared in the San Francisco Chronical's "Grab Bag":
 "No bird is really blue. None produces blue pigment. What you see when you see a blue bird is the light that bounces off the bird's true pigment. It absorbs all the rays except blue." (Now doesn't that apply to EVERYTHING we see? Doesn't that make all of our definitions of colors to be meaningless? So what is the point they were trying to make? Honestly, the crap that is published sometimes!)

3 Gnostic KOANS (with Answers!) ^{by} Kinney



By Jay Kinney (currently editor of Gnosis magazine), originally published in "The Gnostic", the newsletter of the Ecclesia Gnostica Mysteriorum, Palo Alto, CA. Used with permission. (Thanks, Jay)





FAMILY PORTRAIT



PAULINA & JEFF



WHAT MADE US ALL LAUGH?!